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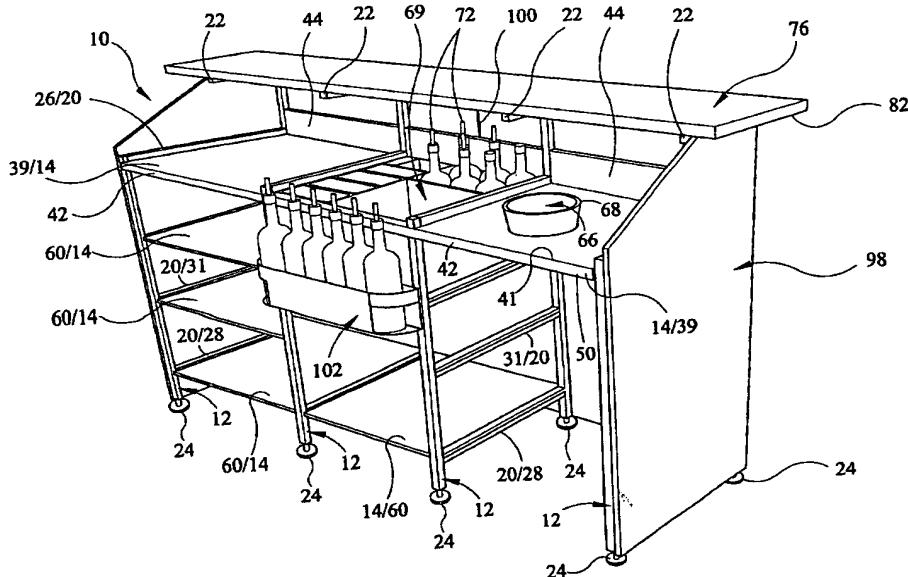
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(54) Title: COLLAPSIBLE BAR



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(57) Abstract: A collapsible bar (10) comprises first and second support members (12), a surface element (14), and means for releasably latching the surface element (14) to the first and second support members (12). Preferably, the releasable latching means includes an elongate channel (36) on each support member (12) and two skirt-portions (38) on the surface element (14). Each skirt-portion (38) is receivable in a respective elongate channel (36) as a close fit.

COLLAPSIBLE BAR

This invention relates to a collapsible bar.

5 Social functions, such as held in a pavilion or marquee, often have a temporary
bar set up to serve drinks and snacks. However, the bar is often arranged from trestles
and planks of wood, or tables, with a large table cloth positioned thereover to enhance
the overall aesthetic appeal. Such an arrangement can be unstable, often does not
provide a suitably organised environment for serving different drinks, and does not
10 look particularly attractive or professional.

The present invention seeks to overcome this problem.

According to the present invention, there is provided a collapsible bar
15 comprising first and second support members, a surface element, and means for
releasably latching the surface element to the first and second support members.

Preferable and/or optional features of the present invention are set forth in
claims 2 to 13, inclusive.

20

The invention will now be described, by way of example, with reference to the
accompanying drawings, wherein :

Figure 1 shows a perspective view of one embodiment of a collapsible bar,

when assembled, in accordance with the present invention;

Figure 2 shows the collapsible bar of Figure 1 when partially dismantled;

5 Figure 3 is a side view of part of the collapsible bar shown in Figures 1 and 2;

Figure 4 is a sectional view taken along the line A-A in Figure 3;

Figure 5 is an enlarged view of part of releasable retaining means shown in

10 Figure 4;

Figure 6 is an enlarged view of part of a latch element shown in Figure 4; and

Figure 7 is an enlarged view of part of bar-top retaining means shown in

15 Figure 4.

Referring to the drawings, a collapsible bar 10 is shown having a plurality of support members 12, a plurality of surface elements 14 which can be selectively supported between the support members 12, and means for releasably latching the 20 surface elements 14 to the support members 12.

The number of support members 12 is selected depending on requirements and can vary from two to any number. In this case, four support members 12 are shown.

Each support member 12 is in the form of a stainless steel frame having, in use, tubular vertical front and back uprights 16 and 18 and a plurality of horizontal cross-members 20 which interconnect the front and back uprights 16 and 18. The back upright 18 extends above the front upright 16 and includes a bar-top support member 22 projecting perpendicularly or substantially perpendicularly from its top end towards or substantially towards the longitudinal axis of the front upright 16.

Each front and back upright 16 and 18 includes an adjustable foot support 24 projecting from its bottom end to help stabilise the bar 10 once erected.

10

The top and bottom cross-members 26 and 28 are, typically, welded to the front and back uprights 16 and 18. The front and back uprights 16 and 18 also include sets of through-holes 30 (best seen in Figure 4) by which the remaining cross-members 31 can be releasably supported by the front and back uprights 16 and 18 via movable screw-threaded support devices, such as bolts (not shown) and internally threaded, typically nylon, lugs 32. Consequently, the releasable cross-members 31 can be repositioned as necessity dictates.

As best seen in Figure 5, all the cross-members 20 have an inverted U-shaped or substantially U-shaped transverse cross-section. Each bottom longitudinal free-edge 34 of each cross-member 20 is outwardly upturned to form an open-ended elongate channel 36.

A range of surface elements 14 are provided which can perform different

functions. Each surface element 14 is formed from stainless steel and includes two side skirt portions 38 which project downwards from opposing side edges 40 of the surface element 14.

5 When the surface element 14 is a work surface element 39, the opposing side skirt portions 38 are interconnected along the front edge 41 of the work surface element 39 by a front skirt portion 42 and an upstanding splash plate 44 is formed along the back edge 46 of the work surface element 39.

10 The front skirt portion 42 of the work surface element 39 extends lower than the side skirt portions 38. Each side skirt portion 38 therefore includes a step 48 down to the level of the bottom edge 50 of the front skirt portion 42.

15 Each side skirt portion 38 is also formed with a depending latch element 52 or hook (best shown in Figure 6) on a free-edge 54 adjacent to the back edge 46 of the work surface element 39. The latch element 52 projects towards the front edge 41 of the work surface element 39 so that a recess 56 is formed dimensioned to receive the open-ended edge 58 of the elongate channel 36.

20 On the other hand, when the surface element 14 is simply a shelf surface element 60, the opposing side skirt portions 38 are interconnected along the front and back edges 41 and 46 of the shelf surface element 60 by front and back skirt portions 62 and 64, thus creating an endless skirt.

The provision of the endless skirt portion or the provision of the front skirt portion 42 and the splash plate 44 enhances the rigidity of the surface element.

One work surface element 39 includes an aperture 66 for waste disposal. A
5 suitable waste container (not shown) can be held in the aperture, or the aperture can support a chute 68 which leads to a suitable waste container (not shown) positioned therebeneath.

Further work surface elements 39 include a recess (not shown) dimensioned to
10 function as a sink for washing up; a recess 69 dimensioned to function as an ice-chest or -bucket; and one or more openings or recesses 70 dimensioned to receive one or more bottles 72 or glasses (not shown). Other functions, such as beer wells and drainer counters, can also be incorporated into work surface elements 39.

15 Obviously, combinations of the waste disposal aperture 66, sink recess, ice-chest /-bucket recess 69, one or more bottle / glass openings or recesses 70, and any other included function may be utilised in a single work surface element 39.

Also, the surface elements 14, especially the shelf surface elements 60, may be
20 perforated (not shown) for lightness.

The releasable latching means comprises the elongate channel 36 and the side skirt portions 38. The elongate channels 36 are dimensioned to be able to receive the side skirt portions 38 of the surface elements 14 as close fits.

To assemble the collapsible bar 10, a first pair of the frame support members 12 are supported in a generally in use vertical position. The required work surface element 39 is selected and its side skirt portions 38 are seated in the opposing elongate channels 36 of the top fixed horizontal cross-members 26. The work surface element 5 39 is then urged in a back edge-to-forward edge direction to engage the open-ended edges 58 of the elongate channels 36 with the latch elements 52. When the latch element 52 is engaged with the elongate channel 36, the step 48 in each side skirt portion 38 is slightly spaced forward of the front edge 41 of the respective elongate channel 36. This helps to prevent disengagement of the latch element 52 through 10 incidental contact by a user pushing against the work surface element 39.

This part of the bar 10 thus becomes freestanding.

One or more shelf surface elements 60 can then be selectively positioned on 15 the bottom fixed horizontal cross-members 28 and/or the releasable cross-members 31.

A further frame support member 12 can then be attached to one of the erected frame support members 12, in a similar manner as described above, via a further 20 selected work surface element 39 and, if needs be, one or more further shelf surface elements 60.

Since the shelf surface elements 60 have the endless skirt portion, when located in the elongate channels 36, any incidental contact that tends to move the shelf

surface element 60 forwards or backwards causes the inner surface of the front skirt portion 62 or the back skirt portion 64 to contact the open-ended edges 58 of the elongate channels 36, thereby preventing further undesirable movement.

5 The various work surface elements 39 and the shelf surface elements 60 can thus be selected and positioned depending on requirements. The various work surface elements 39 and the shelf surface elements 60 are also repositionable and interchangeable with each other.

10 The collapsible bar 10 also includes a bar-top element 76 (shown in Figure 1) which is supportable on the bar-top support members 22. Means for releasably retaining the bar-top element 76 on the bar-top support members 22 is provided, as best shown in Figure 7. The releasable retaining means takes the form of a U-shaped or substantially U-shaped latch member 78 attached along one of its edges 80 to the underside 82 of the bar-top element 76 and an inverted U-shaped or substantially U-shaped complementary saddle member 84 fixedly seated on, and overhanging, the top surface 88 of each bar-top support member 22. The overhanging portions 90 of the saddle member 84 project downwards and are spaced from the sides 92, respectively, of the bar-top support member 22 to form inverted elongate channels 94.

15 The free-edge 96 of each latch member 78 is spaced from the underside 82 of the bar-top element.

20 To position the bar-top element 76 on the bar-top support members 22, the

free-edges 96 of the latch members 78 of the bar-top element 76 are slide from one end into the corresponding inverted elongate channels 94. The inverted elongate channels 94 are dimensioned so that, when seated, the latch members 78 are held relatively tightly to prevent or inhibit accidental displacement of the bar-top element

5 76.

The bar-top element 76 is latchably jointed (not shown), typically across its width and using releasable latching means similar to that described above, to permit dismantling and/or extending of the bar-top element 76 so that it can assume different
10 lengths and be conveniently stored.

However, the joints could be in the form of hinges to permit folding. The hinged joints can be dismantled and reconnected to enable the bar-top element 76 to assume different lengths.

15

A screen wall 98 is also provided for screening the front and sides of the erected bar 10 from patrons. The screen wall 98 is, similarly to the bar-top element 76, hingably jointed (best shown in Figure 2) to enable convenient foldable storage. The hinged joints 100 can be dismantled and reconnected so that the screen wall 98
20 can accommodate different bar sizes.

The screen wall may be freestanding. However, the screen wall may be releasably latchable to the support members via releasable latching means similar to that described above.

The work surface elements may simply be formed with an endless skirt, instead of with a lower front skirt portion and a back splash plate.

Furthermore, the latch element could be dispensed with by forming the 5 elongate channel with closed-ends.

As shown in Figure 1, the front skirt portion of the surface element may be formed with a bottle rack 102 or, as the case may be, glass rack (not shown).

10 The support members may be formed from sheet material instead of being in the form of a frame. In this case, the elongate channels are formed on the sheet, for example by pressing or welding.

Also, although it is convenient to form a single elongate channel along one 15 bottom longitudinal edge of the cross-member, a plurality of separate channels could be formed, for example one being adjacent to the front upright and one being adjacent to the back upright.

It is thus possible to provide a collapsible bar which can be temporarily erected 20 in almost any location and sized to accommodate any requirement. It is also possible to provide a collapsible bar having the conveniences and functions of a permanent bar, and which is aesthetically pleasing. Furthermore, it is possible to provide a collapsible bar having selectively positionable, repositionable and interchangeable work surface elements and shelf surface elements.

The embodiment described above is given by way of example only and various modifications will be apparent to persons skilled in the art without departing from the scope of the invention as defined by the appended claims.

CLAIMS

1. A collapsible bar comprising first and second support members, a surface element, and means for releasably latching the surface element to the first and second support members.

2. A collapsible bar as claimed in claim 1, wherein the releasable latching means includes an elongate channel on each support member and two skirt-portions on the surface element, the skirt-portions being receivable in the channels as a close fit.

10

3. A collapsible bar as claimed in claim 2, wherein each channel is open-ended and wherein the releasable latching means also includes a latch element which can slidably receive the open-end edge of the channel.

15 4. A collapsible bar as claimed in claim 3, wherein the latch element is formed on a free-edge of the skirt-portion.

5. A collapsible bar as claimed in any one of claims 2 to 4, wherein each support member is in the form of a frame having, in use, front and back uprights and a plurality of horizontal cross-members interconnecting the front and back uprights.

20 6. A collapsible bar as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, wherein the surface element is selectable depending on requirement from a range of surface elements having different functions.

7. A collapsible bar as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, wherein the surface element is selectively positionable on the first and second support members, is repositionable on the first and second support members and is interchangeable with 5 another surface element.

8. A collapsible bar as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, further comprising a bar-top element, which is supportable by the first and second support members, and means for releasably retaining the bar-top element on the first and 10 second support members.

9. A collapsible bar as claimed in claim 8, wherein the bar-top element is hingably jointed to enable folding.

15 10. A collapsible bar as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, further comprising a screen wall for screening the front and sides of the in use bar from patrons.

11. A collapsible bar as claimed in claim 10, wherein the screen wall is hingably 20 jointed to enable folding.

12. A collapsible bar as claimed in claim 10 or claim 11, wherein the screen wall is freestanding.

13. A collapsible bar as claimed in claim 10 or claim 11, wherein the screen wall can be releasably latched to the support members via the releasable latching means.

14. A collapsible bar substantially as hereinbefore described with reference to the accompanying drawings.

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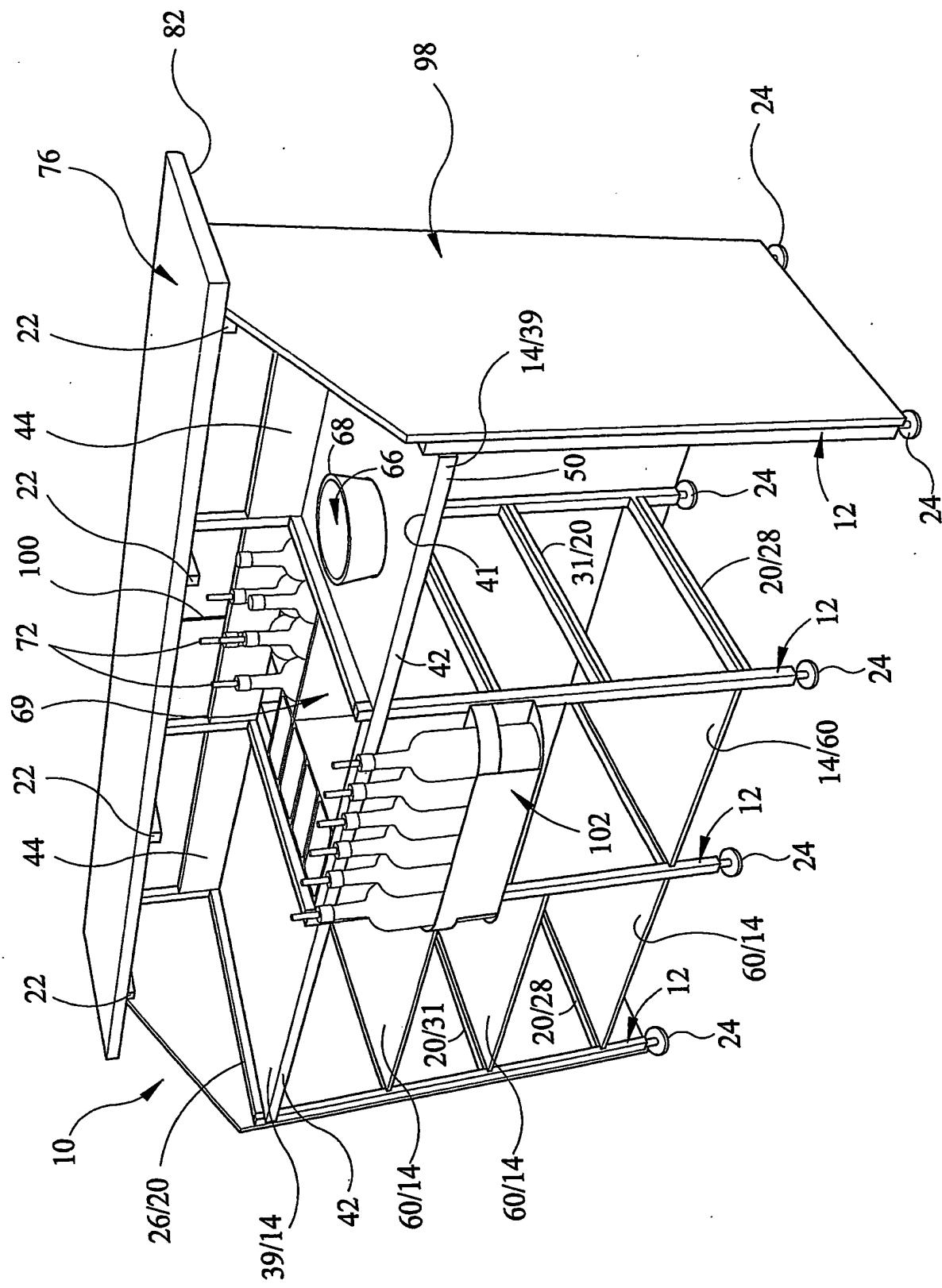


FIG 1

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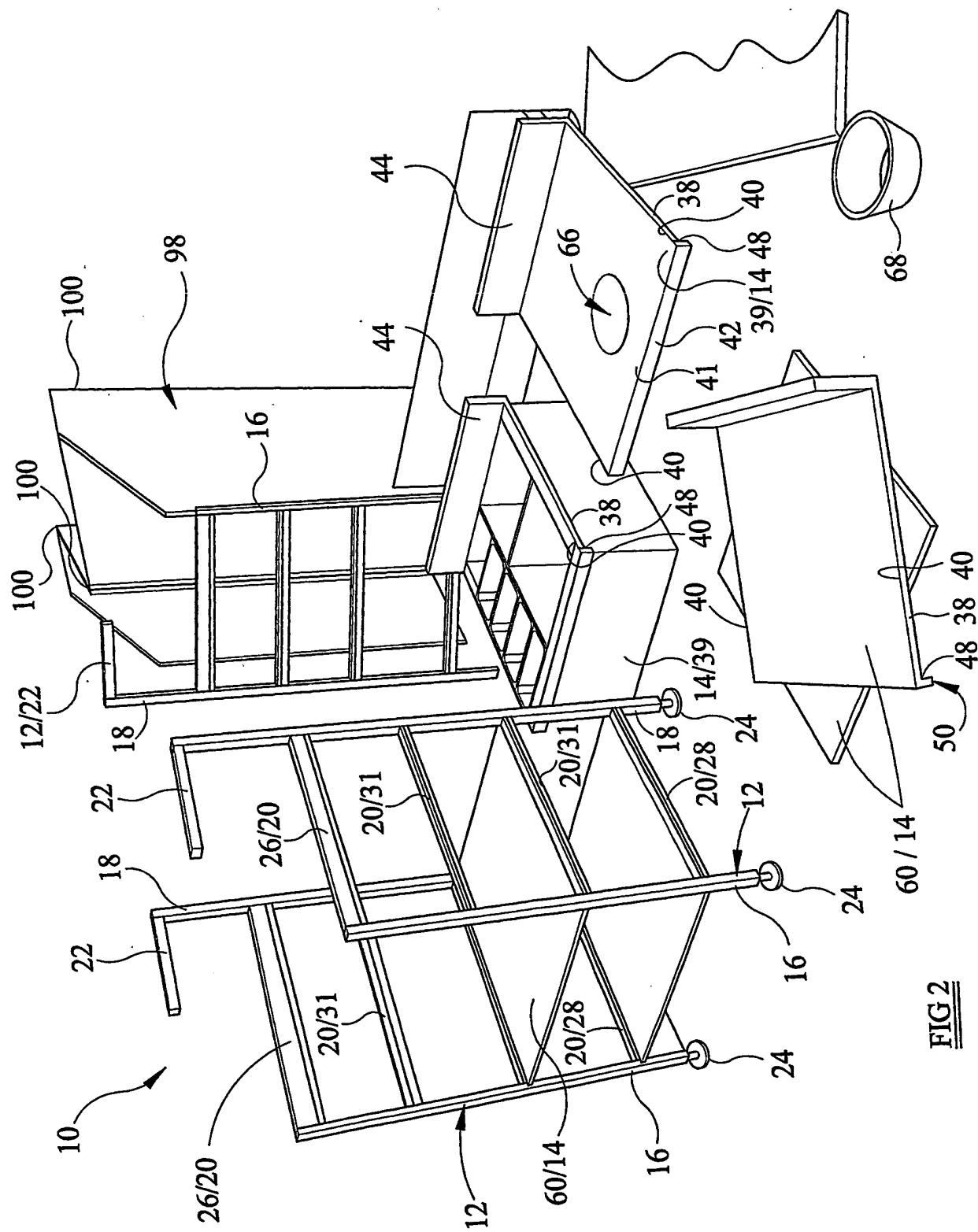


FIG 2

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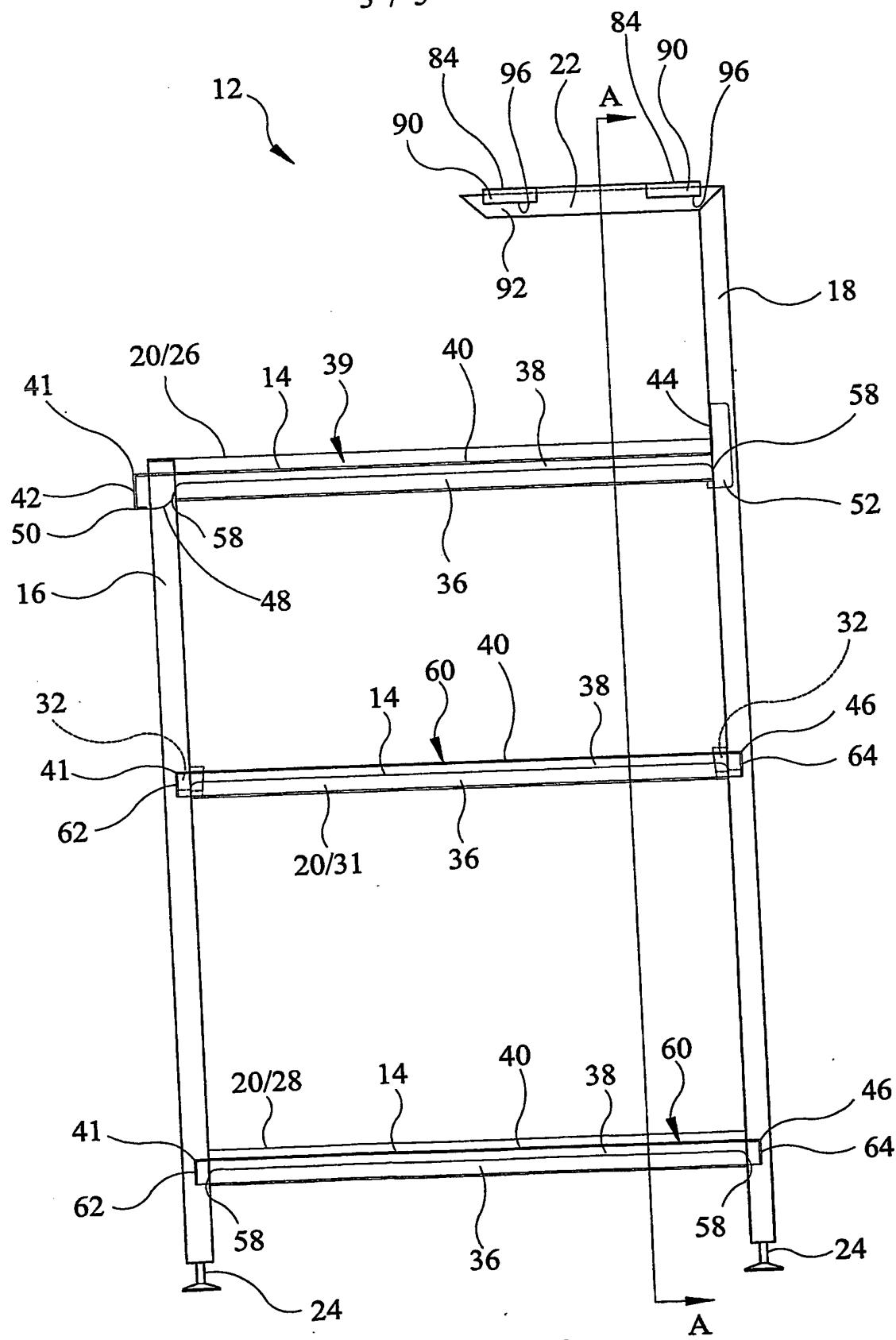
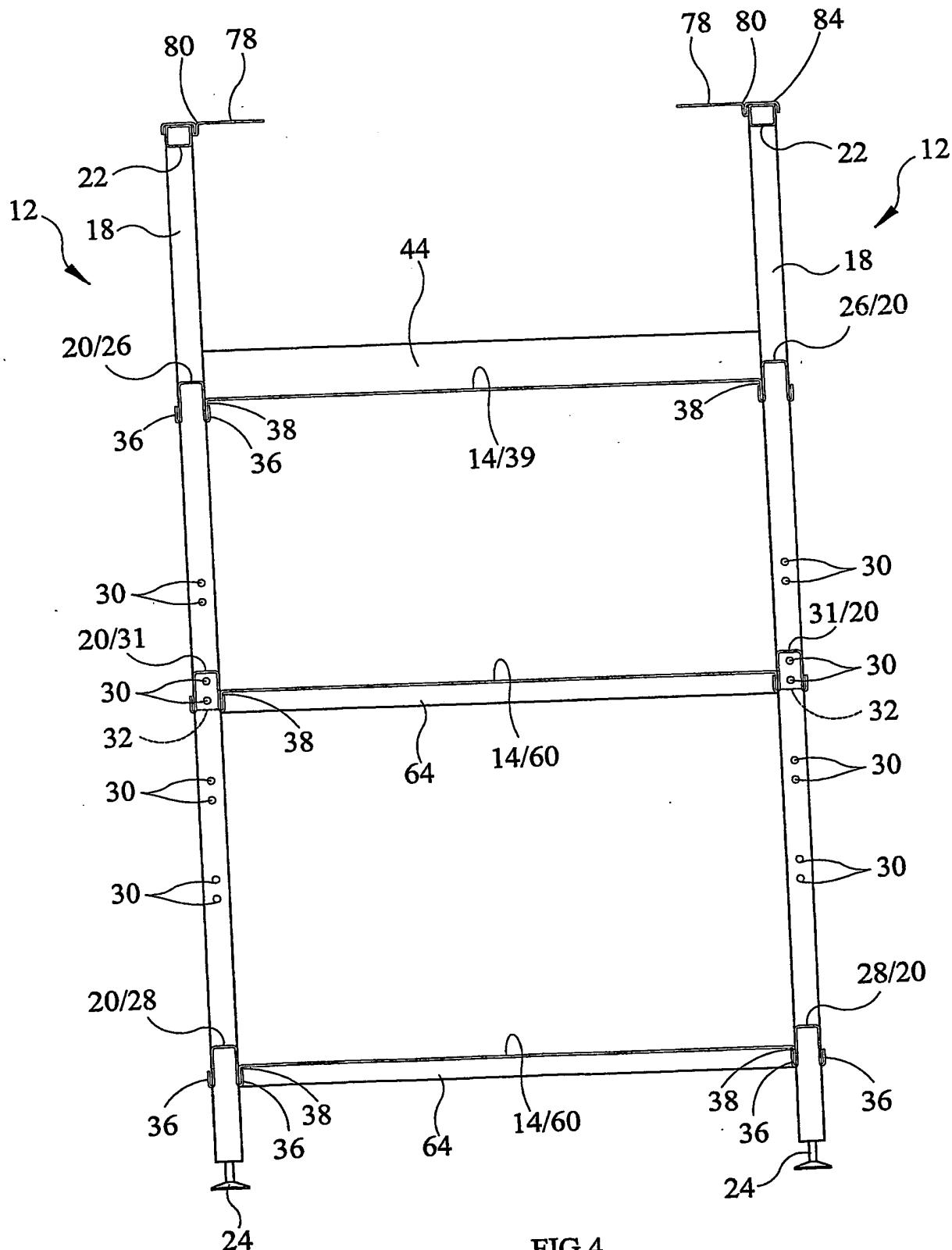
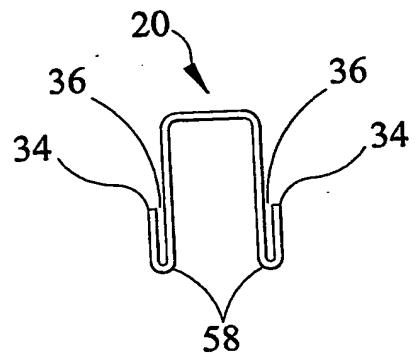
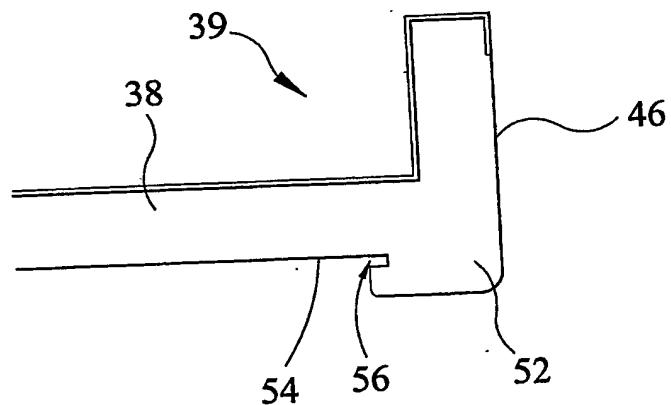
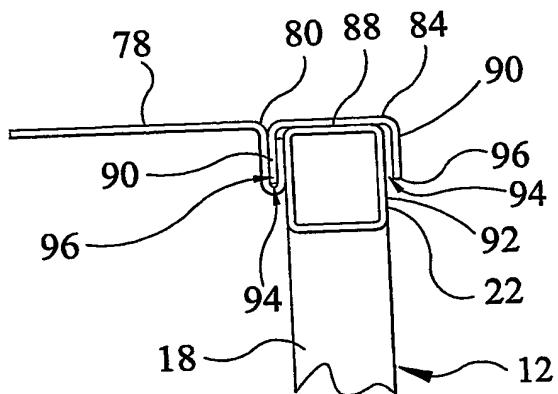


FIG 3

SUBSTITUTE SHEET (RULE 26)

FIG 4

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FIG 5FIG 6FIG 7

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International Application No
PCT/03/02498A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER
IPC 7 A47B43/00 A47B69/00

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)
IPC 7 A47B A47F

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practical, search terms used)

EPO-Internal, WPI Data, PAJ

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
X	DE 39 02 554 A (THIELMANN ALBERT) 2 August 1990 (1990-08-02) column 2, line 8 -column 3, line 14; figures 1-7	1,8,9,14
Y		2-5, 10-13
X	US 3 644 011 A (MACDONALD KENNETH A) 22 February 1972 (1972-02-22) column 1, line 65 -column 3, line 6; figures 1-6	1,6,7, 10,11,14
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Y	US 5 997 113 A (BENSON CLEON E) 7 December 1999 (1999-12-07) column 6, line 31 -column 9, line 47; figures 10-16	2-5
		-/-



Further documents are listed in the continuation of box C.



Patent family members are listed in annex.

* Special categories of cited documents :

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INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Inter Application No
PCT/ 03/02498

C.(Continuation) DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
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